

Carl Vinson Sailors Learn DUI Realities

By MC2 Stephen Murphy,
USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70)

The safety department aboard USS *Carl Vinson* simulated sobriety testing with crew members and Northrop Grumman Newport News (NGNN) shipyard employees in the ship's hangar bay Sept. 22.

Wearing vision-impairment goggles, participants got to experience what it's like to be under the influence of alcohol and undergo a sobriety test while under that influence. Physical-security personnel from the ship administered the sobriety tests.

"We wanted to show people how alcohol can affect them," said ET2(SW) Kymberli Brzyski, *Carl Vinson's* traffic-safety coordinator. "We let them see firsthand what it's like to get pulled over and have to take a sobriety test.

"Some of the most common things you hear from people who are charged with DUI," said Petty Officer Brzyski, "are, 'I thought I had things under control, 'I only had one drink', or 'I didn't think it would happen to me.'"

Participants used goggles simulating the effects of alcohol at levels that represented what it was like to have had one drink, up to what it was like to have had enough drinks to put their BAC three times over Virginia's legal limit of 0.08. Impairment levels then were put to the test as *Carl Vinson* Sailors tried to walk a straight line, legibly write their name, or catch a football. Many participants said the event was an eye-opening experience.

"This makes me not want to drink and drive," said CSSN John Bradley Webb IV, of *Carl Vinson's* supply department.

Another participant weighed in with these comments, "It would be pretty ridiculous to think you could drive with your vision impaired like that," said AN Thomas Garcia, of the weapons department. "It's not worth my career, money or life."

Representatives from the legal department were on hand with some legal advice and to explain the consequences of a DUI conviction. With the combination of fines, court costs, and loss of driver's license, the cost of one DUI is between \$5,000 and \$20,000. Blood-alcohol readings between 0.08 and 0.14 will result in a one-year suspension of your driver's license. Someone with a BAC of 0.15 to 0.19 will receive a mandatory sentence of five days in jail, and, if you're found with a BAC of 0.20 or higher, the sentence is 10 days in jail.

Said LN1(SW/AW) Anthony Hernandez. "When Sailors are released from jail, they will be escorted to the ship as a courtesy turnover. We will do our investigation, and, if they are found to have committed the offense, they will be written up, and non-judicial punishment (NJP) or court-martial will ensue."

Hernandez said *Carl Vinson* Sailors who are charged with DUI usually receive the maximum allowable punishment from the command. "They can look forward to a possible 45 days on restriction, 45 days of extra duty, and reduction in rank by one pay grade," he explained. "If they go to a summary court-martial, they are looking at up to 30 days' confinement."

Carl Vinson Sailors have some options to help them avoid DUIs, which include not drinking, using a designated driver, and taking advantage of the ship's free-ride program. Free-ride cards, obtainable through individual departments, ensure a free cab ride home for all Sailors who find themselves under the influence of alcohol.

"This latter option is the best one for *Carl Vinson* Sailors who are going to drink," said ET1(SW) Christopher Hubbel, the safety department's leading petty officer. "There are no repercussions for using them [free-ride cards], and they guarantee Sailors get home without harming themselves or anyone else."



Carl Vinson's safety department is working on a survey they will use to find responsible Gold Eagle [ship's nickname] Sailors who are willing to be on call to transport shipmates home who may be under the influence of alcohol. Petty Officer Hubble said the safety department will continue working to find ways to reach out to Carl Vinson Sailors and help them understand the harsh realities of drinking and driving. 🚫

Carl Vinson is undergoing a scheduled refueling complex overhaul (RCOH) at Northrop Grumman Newport News Shipyard. The RCOH is an extensive yard period that all Nimitz-class aircraft carriers go through near the mid-point of their 50-year life cycle.

For more info, go to: <http://www.dui.com/>, http://www.iihs.org/laws/state_laws/dui.html, or <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/stopimpaired/>.

Master-at-Arms Second Class Josh Stark (right) briefs CSSN John Bradley Webb IV during Sept. 22, 2006, field-sobriety testing held in the ship's hangar bay.

Photo courtesy USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70) photo lab